

Watt
in Enslin

16, St Vincent Place.

Glasgow 1st Nov. '93

My dear sir,

I recd the other day
the second part of Tryon's book
and am much indebted to your
kindness in sending it to me;
as "local" books of that sort do
not often find their way across
here and it is therefore only by a
rare chance that they ever fall
into my hands.

I am sorry that the im-
provement in this work is but
small - the lithographs are a
little better I think, but there is
still the same absence of accuracy
of outline - the same bad arrangement
of figures also continues - figures should
always be consecutive in the plates.



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The letterpress is miserable, and there is an almost entire absence of details of the animals, which, in a work dealing with the mollusca living under Mr. Tryon's very eyes, is inexcusable.

Altho so meagre, the letterpress is very inaccurate - *Lamellaria* (which he wrongly calls *Marseuina*) cannot be described as a "north of Europe" species, it is much more common in Southern Europe, abounding in the Mediterranean & extending to the Madiran group & I believe also to the Canaries - It frequents the northern Coasts also & I have dredged it in Clyde - it is not common however.

Lamellaria (Montagu) was dubbed *Marseuina* by Leach some years later - Gray subsequently divided the genus into several genera, retaining the Montagu name (*Lamellaria*) for the shell figured by Tryon - *L. perspicua* - & allocating *Marseuina* (wh: he changed to *Marseuina*) to a different species



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W. Inyon now calls this shell *Marseniina*
(Gray) *Perspicua* (Lin: sp) - thus blundering
doubly.

Again (page 55) there is the monstrous
statement - not advanced as a hypothesis
but stated as a fact - that the
Cypraea when it wants to increase
the size of its shell breaks the
old one across the back & so
enlarges it - This process being, in
Inyon's lively imagination, easier
than some other which he names.

This nonsense has been, times
without number, refuted - Anyone
who matches the different phases of
the Cypraea's growth must be convinced
that that phenomenon is carried on
in the same manner as in other
mollusca - The Cypraea does not
acquire thickness of base, or general
ponderosity, until its full size has
been developed - when the animal
ceases to grow the shell begins to
be made thicker & the base acquires



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the fully developed "teeth" and varices.

I noted two or three other marks of Carelessness but have already said enough on that head.

By the way the statements as to *Voluta harmonica* are interesting - I should like to know truly if this fine shell has been noticed at a number of localities in Georgia & Florida - this means, I presume, in a living state.

There are 2 specimens in Brit. Mus: one full grown - both are dead shells & slightly doctored with the file, I think they are *Modiolopsis* specimens.

I have also seen a specimen at Paris & two small imperf. ones in private museums in London.

If you can procure a full grown live shell of this species at \$100, buy it & we'll divide a good com: out of it.

There is one source of com: = fratulation in re Tryon's book - viz: that there are to be only 100 copies printed, so that but few people will have the misfortune to see such



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a discreditable attempt at book making.

I return the work by today's mail

William & all his live stock are very well - They had a Childrens party last night, that's Halloween you know - Donkin for aiples & burning nuts &c - Jim grows a big boy & the fovernor is very proud of him.

Business continues fair - we make a living - but a black cloud has been gathering for some months in the East as well as with you & the Croakers are having an innings just now.

Your pots were shipped ten days ago and I hope will please you - We didn't insure them.

Our grain trade is very quiet, a large import is expected from America, & I think prices will go higher if the failure of the crops in Hungary & So: Russia



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turns out to be true - as I believe
it is - As a grain storekeeper I
always pray for low prices & big
imports, and the prospects of
these two eventualities are, I think
bad, except that America will
send us a large quantity.

The "faucet Court" will be at
New York in a month hence, she
is to bring grain in bags to
Glasgow @ $7/6$ p. gr. - not a
bad rate!

Believe me to be

Very sincerely Yours

Alfred Brown

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28 Bumbalk Gardens

Glasgow.
14 January 1874

My dear Sir,

The last number published by W. Tryon (N^o 3 I think) was delivered here during my absence in England and only reached my hands a couple of days ago on my return. Altho' the wrapper does not bear your handwriting, yet I suppose I owe the book to your kindness.

Not considering the book as a fifth horse I have taken a look at its contents with a critical eye, and find as before a very poor production indeed.

The indifferent opinion I formed of its merits from the very first is not in any way diminished, and there is here apparent the same slovenly inaccuracy, or (quite as frequently) total absence, of detail — When dealing with the larger species — fusus, murex, Cypraea &c. — minute detail is perhaps not absolutely necessary, although always



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Gratefully appreciated by the student; but when we come to such an exceedingly difficult group as the pyramidellidae we expect a little more in the way of description than a few bald epithets scattered about (as in *Odostomia* Nos. 1. & 4.) whilst the characteristic features of the shells - the delicate sculpture - the curious form of the apex & the peculiarities of the operculum - all of high specific value - are passed over in silence.

When the Shells are dealt with in so unsatisfactory a manner, what can we expect as regards the animals? Not much - accordingly we are only treated to short generic or family descriptions - specific descriptions don't exist.

Many of the details, such as they are, might be criticised adversely but *le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle*, I may remark however that in the short descr. of *Dentalium* (p. 96) there exists more than one error - These animals, as M. Lacaze Duthiers shows in his memoir,



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possess no heart - their sexes are separate -
the branchiae are rudimentary & they
are furnished with numerous retractile
tentacles - not tentacles as we understand
them in snails, organs of touch & perhaps
of sight, but tentacles apparently useful
in seizing their food.

The anatomical details I have not
verified for myself, not being clever
enough with the dissecting needle, but
no one can have watched dentalium
carefully without noticing the long
tentacula - it is however a sluggish
shy creature in confinement, & no one
but an enthusiast would care to devote
much time to their examination.

Mr. Fyous English is sometimes
peculiar - what do you make of
this description of *Cocum* (p. 75.)

"Shell minute when young, discoidal
when adult" ? - does "minute" on
your side the water, indicate shape -
or does the term "discoidal" convey an
idea of size to the Western mind ?



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The plates are common place but the species are fairly recognisable - they are totally deficient in what a french artist would call "Chique" - Knack - touch - we have no word for it, or I cant remember the right one at the moment.

The geographical & bathymetrical details are again unsatisfactory - *Ocostomia* is found at greater depths than 40 fms: & *dentatum* (with us at least) at less depth than 10 fms: viz: at low water.

Altogether this work is a mistake - I much regret that it has been published, as its Existence will, I fear, deter some one more competent, or more diligent than Mr Tryon from undertaking a useful and much wanted publication - we very much require a thoroughly exhaustive & well illustrated catalogue of your Coast shells (Goulds report on the Mass: Invertebrates, Stimpsons & other such being unprocureable except by a rare chance & at high prices) and for the price of Tryons book we ought to have one - Look at Jeffreys recent



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British Conchology - 5 octo. vols: bound in
Cloth, good type, good paper, 102 Coloured +
30 or 40 uncoloured plates of thoroughly
well executed original figures, & a
most admirable descriptive letterpress,
all for (nett) £ 4.7.6 - whilst this palling
american book costs (coloured) considerably
more. - ~~£~~

The Scientific public - or rather that
portion of the public which looks on Science
& Investigation of all sorts with a favourable
Eye - does not desire to impose a
fictitious value on a book of this sort
by limiting its issue to a small
number of Copies & the immediate
destruction of the lithographic - or other -
plates - on the contrary, this proposal
of Mr. Fryers is a vulgar bait, and
shows a total absence of the "feu
sacré" - a pandering to the - as far
as science goes - useless craving of
the bibliomaniac. Your true En-
thusiast would rather desire to
spread the information as widely as
possible & this can only be done by



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Multiplying the number of Copies and
Cheapening their Cost - It is ridiculous
to say that for a work of merit on
such a Subject only one hundred
buyers could be found -

In this latter respect however
the British Author stands in a very
favourable position - We are certainly
a people which buys scientific &
quasi scientific literature very freely
& we have been characterised by this
amiable weakness for long - Dr Gray
tells us - rather reminds us - that the
late M. de Férussac expressed his amaze-
ment at the manner in which Woods
Ind: Test: was bought up in England.
Index Botanicus
- This book was published at some
£7 or so in 1829 (equal to £10 now
I fancy) & the Edition of 1000 Copies
was rapidly cleared out - & since then
several Supplements & ^a new Editions
have appeared & been absorbed
It is this love for nature, or for a



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Smattering of Science, that fosters such
authors as M^r. Millou - Gosse - & c^o, and
I cannot say that I regret it, as, however
flimsy & inaccurate such books may
be they tend to direct young peoples
minds to what I believe to be the most
unalloyed source of pleasure in this
pleasant world.

I have heard nothing of Mr
Whiteaves for some time - hope he
had his usual Expedition to the Gulf
& encountered less bad weather
than formerly - I have been looking
forward with eagerness to his promised
Contributions to the Annals & Maga:
- a sort of prodronus of the Gulf
fauna - but it comes not. I hope
its being deferred may cause it to
grow in bulk - these Contributions
are always too short - they kindly
assume that we know a lot already
on the subject, whereas (as regards
yourself at least) we know about



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as much as we do of the moons
inhabitants.

With kind regards

Believe me,

very sincerely yours

Alfred Brown

P.S. I detain this & the pamphlet ~~and~~ for a
few days as I expect two or three U.S.
littoral shells ~~to~~ from a friend &
desire to compare them before returning
Mr. Brown's book.

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mit
Engelmann



Glasgow.
28 Jan'y 1874

My dear Sir,

Since writing on 17th -
- letter enclosed - I have your note
of 10th - and have obtained Lamarche
& Decandolle's flora - The binding
is rotten but may do well
enough if handled very tenderly
- If you want the book it is a
cheap one at 10/., but is hardly
worth rebinding - let me know
what to do with it.

You are quite welcome to
digest my remarks into a



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review as you propose - I have
not kept any copy of my notes
& do not well recollect all
the objections I had to the book,
but I think you are pretty safe
in founding a ~~paper~~ review on
these notes as I think nothing
was overstated - had I thought
of such a destination more care
might have been taken to elaborate
the Charge.

You may freely pound
the thing to smash, there is
no use showing mercy to the
compiler of such a book.

With reference to the insane
statement that "Cypripedium" breaks



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the back of its shell when its body
has grown too large, I have searched
in vain for the author of this theory
- Lamarck, Bruguières & others thought
that under these circumstances the
mollusc quitted its shell & made
another - in a manner (as they
supposed) analogous to the annual
casting of the Carapace in the
Crustaceans - Deuy de Montfort
(1810) was wise enough to scout that
theory - Vol II p. 632 - to show that
Cypraea makes its shell in the
usual manner - Since then
the matter has been placed beyond
doubt.

Cypraea used to be called
"Concha Venerea" and in searching
after the back breaking business



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I came upon the following excellent
reason (in Aldrovandus) for the
^{Bologna 1599-1668}
ancient name

"Concha Venerea sic dicta quia
partem femininam quodam modo
representat; Externè quidam per
labiorum fissuram, internè
verò propter Cavitatem uterum
mentientem - Sicut igitur dicta
Venerea ob aliquam cum pudendo
muliebri similitudinem."

Aldrov: Exaug: p. 552.

but dont put that into Can: Nat:

Very truly yours

Alfred Brown

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